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**FINAL REPORT  
OF THE  
APPRAISAL COMMITTEE  
FOR THE  
DEPARTMENT OF ART HISTORY  
JUNE 28, 1994**

**Christopher Jackson (Chair)  
John Fox  
Janice Helland  
John Locke  
Sheila McDonough  
Rhonda Meiers  
Charmaine Nelson  
Eileen Preston**

## FOREWORD

The Faculty Appraisal Committee for the Department of Art History was composed of the following members:

John Fox, Associate Professor, Department of Painting and Drawing  
Janice Helland, Associate Professor, Department of Art History  
Christopher Jackson, Associate Dean, Faculty of Fine Arts (Chair)  
John Locke, Associate Professor, Department of Cinema  
Sheila McDonough, Professor, Department of Religion  
Rhonda Meier, Undergraduate Student  
Charmaine Nelson, Graduate Student  
Eileen Preston, Associate Professor, Department of Classic

The Committee met 7 times from February 11, 1994 until June 29, 1994. In preparing its report the committee considered the Department's Self-Appraisal Dossier, the reports of two external consultants, Dr. Shelley Hornstein (York University) and Dr. François-Marc Gagnon (Université de Montréal), as well as comments heard during interviews with the Department Chair, Graduate Program Director and Department Secretary.

This report is organized according to the general categories used in the Department Self-Appraisal Dossier, and not in any particular order of priority.

## INTRODUCTION

The Department of Art History at Concordia has established an excellent reputation throughout Canada and abroad for the quality and innovation of its undergraduate programme. Describing the undergraduate programme as "original, dynamique, passionant," external appraiser, François-Marc Gagnon, sums up the remarkable success of the Department:

Concordia semble avoir trouvé la formule pluri-disciplinaire qui correspond le mieux à la fois à l'état présent de la discipline d'histoire de l'art et aux besoins des jeunes historiens.

At the same time, the Department is also widely known for its ongoing commitment to the development of the history of Canadian art, in which it has played a leading role from the start particularly through its publication of the Journal of Canadian Art History, and its introduction of the first graduate programme in Canadian art history.

The Department's reputation is further enhanced by the quality of its teaching; by its distinct identity arising from its close association with studio arts; by the stability and open style of its governance; by a strong, supporting library holding, recognized as one of the best in Canada in the field of Canadian art; and by the various exemplary initiatives undertaken by its student body.

These achievements are considerable. It is in this context that subsequent suggestions are made for the consideration of the Department of Art History. It is to be hoped that in its future directions the Department will continue to maintain and foster the aforementioned strengths upon which its reputation and success have been founded.

## **CURRICULUM**

### **Undergraduate:**

The current undergraduate curriculum is dynamic and highly successful, and results from the immense energy and creativity devoted to experimentation and curricular innovation. At the same time, a seemingly excessive emphasis upon the virtues of diversification may, in turn, generate undue problems and complications affecting students and faculty alike. The practice of planning timetables by means of a competition whereby the faculty member who submits the most 'innovative' course proposal wins, is one which appears to place excessive demands upon the Department's teaching staff. Moreover, the time exacted in the preparation of up to four new three-credit courses per year seriously limits the amount of time which faculty could otherwise devote to their own scholarly research. And lastly, the continuous modification of content(s) from year to year in any given course(s) can cause problems. In addition, students do not always have access to different subject matter if they have already received credit under a particular course number. A greater number of courses repeated on a regular basis would allow students to have greater access to topics of interest. This would also lessen the pressure on faculty to present new material each time a course is offered.

### **Recommendations:**

1. A larger proportion of course offerings be planned on a two or three-year cycle of repeating key courses so that students will be able to plan their programme of study, and full-time faculty will be able to reduce the amount of time spent on the preparation of new course material.
2. The Department reconsider the practice of holding yearly "competitions" as a means of determining teaching assignments.

### **Graduate:**

It is evident that the M.A. in Canadian art history has demonstrated its scholarly merit and has acquired a national reputation based on the specialization of its programme. However, in view of similar graduate programmes which have recently been introduced at other universities, most notably Carleton. The Department might consider enlarging its current specialization without forfeiting its primary academic orientations. The Committee concurs with the remarks made by François-Marc Gagnon when he states:

Il serait plus que souhaitable à notre avis que l'on forme un comité qui puisse se pencher sur le problème spécifique des études graduées en histoire de l'art à Concordia. Ce comité aurait pour mandat d'examiner toutes les options et de faire les recommandations qui s'imposent dans la

conjoncture présente: ou bien 1) maintenir la présente orientation en art canadien sans changement; ou bien 2) lui ajouter une autre dimension plus méthodologique dans l'esprit de celle qui fonctionne déjà au niveau sous gradué; ou bien encore 3) explorer des possibilité de s'associer avec d'autre département et facultés qui s'intéressent aux études canadiennes à Concordia (cultural studies & history, en particulier); etc...

Although part-time faculty members are making important contributions to the graduate programme, the extent to which the Department relies upon its part-time members creates an unusual situation in a university graduate programme. Also of concern is the fact that though several full-time faculty members act in the capacity of thesis advisors, few actively teach in the graduate programme. The Department should move towards a situation in which full-time faculty members develop research areas which will naturally result in their offering more of the graduate courses.

#### **Recommendations:**

- 1) The graduate programme explore means by which to amplify and enrich its current offerings; for instance, by including some of the approaches and methodologies which characterize its undergraduate curriculum.
- 2) More full-time faculty be encouraged to teach in the graduate programme.

#### **FACULTY**

In future, all departments within Concordia will be required to develop faculty profiles in accordance the University's new "Policy For Faculty Teaching Assignments," prepared by Drs. Sheinin and Cohen. Addressed in the aforementioned policy, and underlined in the present document under "Curriculum," is the need to arrive at an equitable balance between faculty members' teaching and research activities. In regards to the latter, and to the level of scholarship generally within the Department of Art History, the Committee noted the rather pointed comments made by external evaluator, François-Marc Gagnon:

Le catalogue d'exposition semble de loin être la forme d'expression préférée des professeurs. On en dénombre plus d'une cinquantaine mentionnés dans les c.v. consultés. Il est vrai que les catalogues d'exposition représentent un débouché pour la recherche en histoire de l'art. Encore faut-il qu'ils représentent autre chose qu'une simple brochure illustrée accompagnée d'un "essai" de quelques pages. Les entrées de dictionnaires sont également fort nombreuses. Les livres par contre se comptent sur les doigts de la main, y compris un, écrit en collaboration.

Les articles dans les revues spécialisées avec comité de lecture sont difficiles à distinguer dans les c.v. qui ont tendance à mettre Vie des Arts, Vanguard, Artscanada, Les chemins de la mémoire, La Plongée, Bulletin de la Fondation Héritage Montréal, Pas à pas dans Saint-Henri sur le même pied que le Journal of Canadian Art History, Woman's Art Journal, Gesta, le Journal of Architectural Historians ou le Art Bulletin. La même disproportion existe si on tente de distinguer dans cet ensemble les publications de caractère local, des publications à portée plus internationale. Certes, l'orientation première de la recherche en art canadien explique en partie cet état de choses. Il n'est pas facile de publier en art canadien dans les revues internationales. Il n'en reste pas moins que le défi d'aujourd'hui pour ceux qui continuent à oeuvrer dans ce champ particulier c'est de sortir de nos frontières et de proposer au moins des approches méthodologiques renouvelées en utilisant un corpus canadien.

Comme on pouvait s'y attendre, la même situation se retrouve au niveau des subventions obtenues par le corps professoral.... Toutes les subventions marquées FCAR sont allées en réalité au Journal of Canadian Art History ou bien sont fort modestes...et devraient être décrites plutôt comme des assistances pour participer à des congrès ou conférences que de véritables subventions de recherche.

The Department will need to make note of Dr. Gagnon's commentary as it prepares its teaching profiles for the coming year. Faculty workload will also need to be considered in the light of plans for expanding graduate work, specifically the new Ph.D. programme. Again, consideration should be given to planning the undergraduate curriculum several years in advance to avoid undue time spent on new course preparations; the time saved could be used to make grant applications, supervise graduate students, and prepare for more work at the graduate level.

#### **Recommendations:**

- 1) Full-time faculty should be encouraged to devote more time to scholarly research and develop research projects involving the participation of graduate students.
- 2) The Department needs to determine appropriate workload for faculty engaged in graduate supervision, and to limit the number of theses to be supervised by individual faculty members. Workload credit should likewise be allocated for graduate supervision.
- 3) In addition, faculty should be encouraged to apply for grants in order to increase much needed financial support for graduate students.

## **STUDENTS**

### **Advising:**

Given the escalation of undergraduate enrolment, 245 (173 art history majors and 72 combined art history and studio art majors in 1993/94), plus the relatively large number of out-of-province students (29%) unfamiliar with Québec's University system, and the frequent number of registration periods throughout the year, student advising is both a continual and enormous task. Additionally, as Professor Don Andrus wrote in the Art History Self-Appraisal Document in January, 1994:

Advising of students is critical at the undergraduate level in light of the nature of the curriculum. When that curriculum came into being back in 1988 it was agreed by all faculty that its success would depend to a considerable degree upon thoughtful and focussed advising, and that situation is as true today as it was then.

Historically, formal advising has been undertaken with goodwill solely by the Department Chair with the occasional assistance of graduate students. The extreme constraints of time and energy which the process imposes upon one faculty member, however, demands that the Department seek to implement a more equitable approach.

### **Recommendations:**

1. Undergraduate advising must not be delegated to only one faculty member; the Department must develop a policy that would evenly distribute the responsibility among faculty members, perhaps on a rotational basis.
2. The Department should also strive to formulate a means by which to acknowledge time devoted to the advising process.
3. The Department might consider organizing round table discussions with groups of students and faculty to air common concerns and pose general questions. This would enable individual issues to be addressed more efficiently.

### **Graduate Students -- Recruitment and Support:**

In contrast to the \$15,000 which the University of Western Ontario pays its research assistants in art history, graduate students at Concordia's department earn \$3640. Indeed, for several years the department has lost its own best students, as well as top-quality applicants to the graduate programme because of such immense funding disparity. As Graduate Studies Programme Director, Dr. Brian Foss remarked, the situation is "critical":

The overall restrictedness of the Department's budget has meant that it is almost never able to contribute funding to

students presenting papers at conferences outside Montreal, despite department-wide recognition of the importance of such activities. Nonetheless, students have become increasingly active in presenting conference papers ... as freelance curators, writers, critics, and lecturers during their time in the programme.

As evidenced by the above statement, graduate students are making significant contributions to the vitality and reputation of the Department; that they manage to survive on funding well below subsistence level is testament to their dedication to the programme. Appropriate funding would serve to significantly enhance student development.

#### **Recommendations:**

1. As the redirection of programme-specific funds is impossible -- since monies set aside specifically for the M.A. programme are already earmarked for funding research and teaching assistantships -- it is urgent that, in collaboration with the University Advancement Office, the Department search for innovative ways (including endowments or outside funding) to increase scholarships and assistantships.
2. That future consideration also be given to funding for space, technical support (i.e. computer terminals and printers), and the hosting of colloquia, in order to attract high calibre applicants.

#### **DEPARTMENTAL STAFF**

The Department has approximately 55 M.A. students. Both the Chair and the Graduate Programme Director require secretarial assistance. The smooth functioning of a complex, semester-based undergraduate programme and an expanding graduate programme, for which the Department handles all the registration and admission, demand constant attention from one over-worked secretary. Anticipated expansion into Ph.D. studies will intensify the incumbent's workload and increase the current overload. In addition, ten full-time faculty members need secretarial services, particularly at the beginning and end of each semester. In any given semester, eight to ten part-time instructors teach in the Department and also require some secretarial assistance. Both external reports commented on the paucity of staffing within the Department as well as upon the excellent working relationship between the secretary and faculty despite the obvious inequity and the problematic nature of the situation. One external report argues that, "while the incumbent is cheerful and sympathetic to the needs of the Department, this will not necessarily sustain morale over the long term." Another evaluator states: "... cette situation fait de Concordia, l'Université la moins bien équipée en personnel non-enseignant que je connaisse." Both reports emphasized the unusual and unfortunate situation within the Department of one person



attempting to accomplish the work of three: an Assistant to the Chair, Undergraduate Secretary and Graduate Programme Secretary.\*

**Recommendation:**

1. The staffing of the Department must be increased as soon as possible to two persons: an Assistant to the Chair and a Departmental Secretary. In the meantime, the present position must be upgraded immediately to a Grade 9 level.
2. The Department should also be encouraged to investigate ways to collaborate with the School of Graduate Studies in the admission process in order to lighten the burden currently being placed on the secretary.

\* Please see addendum noting the number of staff employed in other departments of comparable size within the University.

**TEACHING SPACE**

In Fine Arts Faculty buildings, painting and drawing classes are always located in rooms with windows for natural light. Everyone knows that painting classes should not be taught in windowless basements. Art History classes show slides and hence require dark rooms for part of each class. It appears that space planners feel that they have met all of Art History's teaching needs when they find a windowless space with some seats and a screen.

Almost ten years ago the Art History Department was informing the Faculty of Fine Arts that VA 323 and VA 210 were not always adequate "in terms of angle of vision for the students, writing space to take notes and projection facilities." At that time the ventilation problems were also emphasized. Add to this list the difficult to control temperatures, the security risks, and the noise which regularly disrupts classes in VA 210, and it becomes obvious that the Art History teaching spaces are inadequate and require prompt attention.

**Recommendation:**

1. It is recommended that the teaching space problems outlined above be given priority and corrected. Finding solutions to these problems has been delayed too long already.

**ESSENTIAL RESOURCES OUTSIDE DEPARTMENT**

The Slide Library, the J. Russell Harper Reading Room and the Concordia Library system are all essential resources outside the Department of Art History. These resources are included here to emphasize that the Department does depend on resources outside of its direct control. Slides are used in virtually every class; the

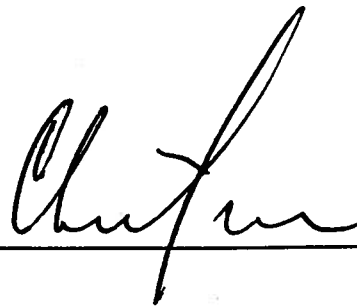
students find having a study area within the VA Building to be of great benefit; the Webster Library collection of books and journals is an important aspect of the strength of the Department.

A concern is that these resources could be seen as expendable, or rather particularly reducible, in the present period of budget crises. Areas outside the Academic Departments may become particularly vulnerable to budget cuts.

**Recommendations:**

1. The J. Russell Harper Reading Room and the Concordia Library, serving both Art History and other visual arts areas, should have their budgets protected in the same manner in which the budgets of the academic departments will be maintained.
2. As slides are used in virtually every class, the Slide Library is a most important teaching resource for the Department. It is vital, therefore, that the Slide Library's acquisition budget not be reduced.

Christopher Jackson, Chair  
Associate Professor, Music  
Associate Dean, Student Affairs  
Faculty of Fine Arts



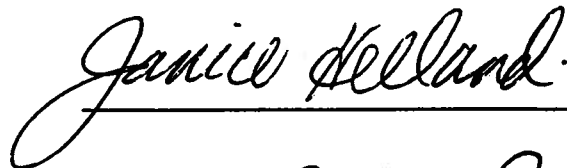
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John Fox  
Associate Professor  
Department of Painting & Drawing  
Faculty of Fine Arts



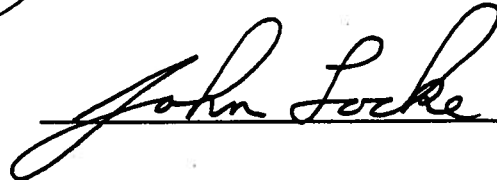
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Janice Helland  
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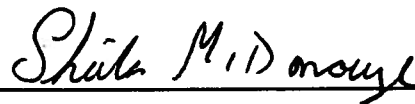
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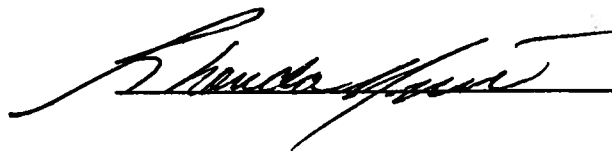
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Professor  
Department of Religion  
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Rhonda Meiers  
Student, Art History  
Undergraduate Programme  
Faculty of Fine Arts

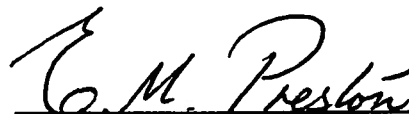


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Charmaine Nelson  
Student, Art History  
Graduate Programme  
Faculty of Fine Arts

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Eileen Preston  
Associate Professor & Chair  
Department of Classics  
Faculty of Arts & Science



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## ADDENDUM

### Department of English -- M.A. Programme

Faculty: 38 Full-time, 60 Part-time (98 Total)

Graduate Students: 130

#### **a) Support Staff -- Loyola Campus:**

- Secretary
- Secretary/Receptionist

#### **b) Support Staff -- S.G.W. Campus:**

- Administrative Assistant
- Secretary to the Chair
- Secretary, English Composition
- Graduate Secretary
- Secretary Receptionist

### Department of History -- M.A. and Ph.D.

Faculty: 25 Full-time, 6 Part-time (31 Total)

Graduate Students: 71 M.A., 17 Ph.D. (88 Total)

#### **a) Support Staff -- Loyola:**

- Secretary

#### **b) Support Staff -- S.G.W.:**

- Administrative Secretary
- Secretary

### Department of Philosophy -- M.A.

Faculty: 19 Full-time, 4 Part-time (23 Total)

Graduate Students: 34 M.A.

#### **a) Support Staff -- Loyola:**

- Secretary to the Chair

#### **b) Support Staff -- S.G.W.**

- Secretary

Department of Political Science - Diploma & M.A.

Faculty: 20 Full-time, 29 Part-time (49 Total)

Graduate Students: 1 Diploma, 119 M.A.

a) Support Staff -- Loyola

- Secretary
- Secretary, Graduate Programme

b) Support Staff -- S.G.W.

- Secretary to the Chair

Department of Sociology & Anthropology -- M.A.

Faculty: 29 Full-time, 30 Part-time (59 Total)

Graduate Students: 43 M.A.

a) Support Staff -- Loyola

- Graduate Secretary

b) Support Staff -- S.G.W.

- Assistant to the Chair
- Secretary to the Chair
- Departmental Secretary

Department of Art Education -- Ph.D., M.A., Diploma

Faculty: 7 Full-time, 11 Part-time (18 Total)

Graduate Students: 13 Ph.D., 23 M.A., 8 Diploma

Support Staff

- Departmental Secretary
- Assistant to the Chair